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# Songs of the Open

By Teresa Hooley



Jonathan Cape

Eleven Gower Street London

*First published, 1921*

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TO  
ALGERNON BLACKWOOD

You have no need of aught that I can bring  
Culled from red Autumn or tumultuous Spring ;  
How should you heed my wild flowers, being free  
Of all Pan's garden and its mystery ?

Yet born of that same soil these blossoms grew,  
Fostered by rain and sunshine, wind and dew.  
You hold the garden's key—is it not meet  
They should be laid in homage at your feet ?

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## Note

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# Songs of the Open

## Our Lady of the Wood

**S**OFTLY through the little wood  
Came the Queen of Heaven,  
Paused, and stood.  
Bluebells, deep as mists of even,  
Like the shadow dim and sweet  
Of the robes around her feet,  
Fragrant, fair,  
Soon were growing, blowing there.

Mary thought of Christ the child,  
Playing at her knees,  
Dear and mild—  
Mother-thoughts amid the trees.  
Wood-anemones all white  
Where the thoughts fell sprang to light,  
Pure and pale,  
Tender, sacred, starlike, frail.

Primroses of happy gold  
Smiled up from the grass :  
“Us behold,  
Mother Mary, as you pass !  
Aureole about His head,  
Your bright hair above Him spread—  
Stoop and see :  
We are golden also, we.”

## 10 The Turn of the Year

So she slowly, softly trod  
Down the woodland way—  
She and God ;  
Watched the lights and shadows play.  
And wild parsley fresh and green,  
With the growing ferns between,  
Small and shy,  
Paved the path as she passed by.

### The Turn of the Year

**T**O-DAY is January still,  
Yet, fugitive and half-divined,  
There comes a scent of daffodil  
And violet on the winter wind.  
There's redness in the willow tops,  
Soft purple on the hedgerows bare,  
And through the dead leaves in the copse  
Young grass is spearing everywhere.  
The briar has new leaves of green,  
Bravely the gorse blooms on the hill—  
To-day the spring is felt and seen,  
Though it is January still.

# Across the Valley

11

## A Wet Day

**I** HATE the tame and tired town ;  
To-day my heart is fain  
For lonely tarns all peaty brown  
And mountains in the rain.

O God, to watch a little span  
The mossy streams that creep  
Down the wild sides of Tal y Fan,  
Among the nibbling sheep !

The grey wind-driven clouds will trail  
In solemn march and slow  
Across the summit like a veil—  
How beautiful, I know.

Gold bracken, bilberry-leaves blood-red,  
Wet heather, purple-brown . . .  
I am but little more than dead  
This rainy day in town.

## Across the Valley

**B**LUE are the swallow's darting wings,  
And blue the dragon-fly ;  
Blue is the bloom on ripened grapes,  
And blue the twilight sky ;  
Heavenly blue the crane's-bill flowers  
That blow beside the lane ;  
But bluer than all are the Charnwood Hills,  
Clear for the coming of rain.

## 12 A Legend of Gethsemane

September

THE swallows wheel about the sky,  
Trying their wings for overseas ;  
The thistledown goes floating by ;  
At midnight shine the Pleiades ;  
And there are mushrooms in the dawn,  
And blackberries all wet with mist ;  
Ripe chestnuts dropping on the lawn ;  
Red apples that the sun has kissed.  
The beech is touched with fire o'erhead,  
Largess of gold the lime down flings,  
Cool asters crowd the garden bed,  
And over all the robin sings.

### A Legend of Gethsemane

“ OH, who is this that seeks at night  
The ways of green Gethsemane ?  
Oh, who is this that prays at night,  
Face to the ground, in agony ?—  
Sorrow of Sorrow, Grief of Grief,”  
Uneasy whispered blade and leaf.

Sudden the Garden understood.  
The grasses, on His garment's hem  
Laid sighing lips—and even as blood  
Were the great drops that fell on them ;  
The flowers all bowed their heads one way ;  
The wild things cared no more to play.



## To My Brother

13

But those there were, of herb and tree,  
Forbore to worship, murmuring thus:  
"Naught but a suffering man we see,  
And what is human grief to us?" . . .  
He turned, the Holy and the Wise,  
And looked on them with anguished eyes.

They trembled, stricken and aware,  
The aspen and the quaking grass:  
"All, all Creation's woe is there.  
Master, forgive! Alas, alas!"  
Too late. Moved by remorse for ever  
The grasses shake, the aspens quiver.

## To My Brother

Major Basil T. Hooley, M.C., Tank Corps, died October 28,  
1918, aged 26.)

**O**UT of the long, long night the dawn comes  
stealing;  
Glimmers the light to show the day is near.  
But what of our hearts when all the bells are  
pealing,  
And you, dear lad, not here?

Nay! but your feet will tramp beside the others,  
When the victors on land and sea come marching in;  
You will know and be glad with those your fighting  
brothers  
For the Peace you helped to win.

We who are left shall still our lamentations,  
And cease for a while to mourn the life we miss,  
Whispering, 'mid the rejoicing of the nations,  
"He hath his part in this."

## In Memoriam

(Captain T. P. C. Wilson, Sherwood Foresters, killed in  
action, March 24, 1918.)

THE larks are happy in the sky,  
The little lambs are gay,  
And under blossoming orchard trees  
The children shout and play.

Hid in the hazel coppice green  
The love-mad thrushes sing :  
All Earth's unheeding things are glad  
For glory of the Spring.

Be gay, you silly innocent lambs,  
For he who loved you well,  
That you may frisk in quiet fields  
Has paid the price of hell.

You thrushes, drench with song divine  
Your leafy solitudes ;  
His voice is stilled that you may nest  
Unharm'd in English woods.

And you, you little children, play :  
How should we wish you sad ?  
For he was young, and he has given  
His life to keep you glad.

## Rain

To F. H. B.

**I**T rains to-day.  
You always loved the rain—  
Glitter of dripping hedge-twigs in the lane,  
Wet scents, and skies all grey.  
But you are fighting in an alien land  
Of scorching heat and sand.

It rains and rains—  
The little runnels flow  
Fast down the beech-trunks, rippling as they go. . . .  
I think of arid plains  
And foreign suns like braziers in the blue,  
And wonder about you.

## Columbines

**A**IRILY poised in the garden bed,  
Delicate saffron, white and rose,  
With gossamer petals lightly spread  
The columbines flutter upon their toes.

Wait, till the moonlight sets them free !  
They'll stir, they'll shake off the dew, they'll go  
Dancing, dancing (but you'll not see—  
You'll be too busy asleep to know).

## Beauty Eternal

Someone surprised them once in May,  
Glimmering ivory, gold, and pink,  
Dancing under the moon. That way  
Columbines found their name, I think.

## Beauty Eternal

**T**O-DAY I saw a butterfly,  
The first-born of the Spring,  
Sunning itself upon a bank—  
A lovely, tawny thing.

I saw a dandelion, too,  
As golden as the sun ;  
And these will still be beautiful  
When all the wars are done.

## A Daffodil Day

**A**LL day long blew the daffodils,  
Oh, what a sight to see,  
A myriad gold-gowned daffodils,  
Moved to a rhythmic glee.

Night drew down on the daffodils ;  
Gold was the moon on high,  
With a golden star-crowd twinkling—  
Daffodils in the sky.

All night long blew the daffodils,  
All night long on the lawn ;  
Pale grew the stars in their courses—  
Up came a daffodil dawn.

“ Nurseries ”

I LOVE the nurseries,  
Where, all arow,  
The trees stand up and grow—  
The little trees:  
Willow and larch and fir,  
Chestnut and juniper,  
Rowan and copper beech,  
Each by each.

Shy aspens slim and fair  
Go trembling ;  
White birches toss and fling  
Rain from their hair—  
Soft rain that fell to-day,  
Warm silver rain of May—  
O scent along the breeze  
Of young wet trees !

And there are fruit trees small,  
Apple and pear—  
Pink petals through the air  
Scatter and fall ;  
Laburnums' yellow shower,  
And lilacs full of flower. . . .  
I am in love with trees  
In nurseries.

## Mist-Lilies

**I**N the little pine wood mist-lilies bloom  
(Spires of the willow-herb seeding in the fall),  
Lighting up the dimness, glimmering through the  
gloom—  
Lilies of the pine wood, dreamlike and tall.

Where rosy flowers flushed, ghost-flowers gleam,  
All along the dark aisles scattering fairy down,  
Ethereal as moonlight, transient as a dream—  
White wraith-lilies in the pine wood brown.

## Thaw

**A**N elfin bell on two notes ringing,  
The titmouse starts his airy singing ;  
The blackbird pulls up from the lawn  
Poor worm no longer frost-withdrawn ;  
The sparrow bathes in pools unfrozen,  
The thrush makes love unto his chosen,  
The chaffinch is no longer dumb—  
They are so glad the thaw has come !

## Clover

WHEREVER Fate may lead me, the wide  
world over,

My thoughts will homeward turn as the long  
days come :

“Midsummer now, and the fields are thick with  
clover,

Where rabbits feed in the dusk and brown bees  
hum.”

In dream I shall lean o’er a gate in the rare June  
weather,

And watch the wind through the clover ripple and  
run—

A million purple heads that shake together,  
Spilling their scent in the warmth of an English sun.

I shall see the great white butterflies dance and  
hover,

And the humble bees with their honey-bags blunder  
by . . .

Or East or West, in June I shall dream of clover,  
From the ends of the earth my thoughts will home-  
ward fly.

## Arcadia

BAREHEADED to winds of summer,  
Through the sun-flecked wood you ran,  
And sudden a veil was lifted—

I saw you other than man,  
Supple and swift and careless,  
In days when the world began.

Under the oaks and beeches,  
By an ancient music drawn—  
The pipes of the Goat-foot, fluting  
To-day as in years of dawn—  
Through the tangled gleams and shadows  
Leapt, laughing—a golden faun.

## Sea-Foam

A FLECK of foam on the shining sand,  
Left by the ebbing sea,  
But richer than man may understand  
In magic and mystery—  
Transient bubbles rainbow bright,  
Myriad-hued and strange,  
Tremble and throb in the noonday light,  
Flower and flush and change.

A million tides have come and gone,  
Great gales of autumn and spring,  
A million summoning moons have shone  
To bring to birth this thing—  
A foam-fleck left on the ribbed wet sand  
By the wave of an outgoing sea,  
With all the colour of Faeryland,  
Wonder and mystery.



## Sea-Gulls Inland

A FLASH of silver wings in the sun,  
And I see, with divine surprise,  
Here in the Midlands quiet and dun—  
Sea-gulls up in the skies!

Sea-gulls ! I am content no more  
With tame little fields and woods :  
My thoughts are set to a rock-bound shore,  
The sea, and the sea's wild moods.

God ! for a headland far away.  
Bare to the autumn gale,  
Where the great waves roar, and the wind-whirled  
spray  
Drifts out like a torn white veil,

And the wild white horses toss their manes  
Far out as the eye may reach,  
While the sea-birds cry in the winds and the rains,  
(The boats moored high on the beach).

\* \* \* \* \*

Back go the sea-gulls, splendid and free,  
In rhythmical, ordered flight,  
And my heart goes with them, home to the sea,  
As I watch them out of sight.

## Vale

SO love between us is over?—But the mountains  
and sea remain,  
The blue of the world at twilight, and the sound of  
the summer rain.  
The touch of the face of flowers is soft as a child at  
the breast ;  
The trees of the wood bring healing, and the far-  
away starfields rest.

I am weary of love and passion—the fever and fume  
and fret—  
I will go back to Nature, and creep in her heart and  
forget ;  
I will be free as the sunlight and follow the wind's  
wild call,  
Till I come to the dews of her bosom in the last  
long sleep of all.

## Epiphany

TO-NIGHT out in the darkness  
The wind is loud and high—  
I saw a star go falling  
Along the wintry sky.

## The Charnwood Hills 23

I think the great wind blew it  
Out of its quiet place,  
The way it shakes the leaves down  
And whirls them into space.

The stars are thick as daisies,  
I cannot number them. . . .  
A happy wind was blowing  
One night round Bethlehem,

And in the Eastern heavens  
Shook down a star to rest  
Above the place where Jesus  
Slept on His mother's breast.

### The Charnwood Hills

I HAVE known moors and mountains,  
And many a wind-swept height,  
But the little hills of Charnwood  
Are precious in my sight.

More blue than dark delphiniums,  
Or violets in the lane,  
Or the bloom on ripened damsons,  
They show before the rain.

## Sand Dunes

But in the heat of summer,  
And at the close of day,  
They dream across the valley  
Wrapt in a mist of grey.

I go to them in sorrow—  
So calm they are, and kind :  
The little hills of Charnwood  
Bring comfort to my mind.

I look on them with worship,  
Because, by land and sea,  
Brave men have died in thousands  
To keep them safe and free.

Sand Dunes : Holy Island,  
Northumberland

THERE'S beauty in the sand dunes—  
Colour and shifting line,  
With little things of wonder,  
Exquisite and divine :  
Forget-me-nots and violets  
As blue as the blue sea ;  
Small flowers with rosy faces  
Whose name is strange to me.

## Our Lady of Violets 25

Red butterflies, and beetles,  
And soft-hued shells of snails,  
Purple and blue of pebbles,  
And white of rabbits' tails—  
Grey gulls to wheel above them,  
And larks to soar and sing—  
There's beauty in the sand dunes  
On any day of Spring !

### Our Lady of Violets

MARY Mother leaned from heaven,  
Gazed upon my little wood,  
Where the trees stood up to praise her  
In the winter solitude.

Snow lay drifted on the branches,  
And the undergrowth was snow—  
White, all white, and far-flung purple  
Where the shadows slept below.

Mary Mother smiled in heaven,  
Bent and brooded o'er the earth :  
*White as snow His stainless life was*  
*From the day I gave Him birth.*

Mary Mother sighed in heaven  
(Long tree-shadows show a cross) :  
*Purple glooms athwart for sorrow,*  
*Pain and sacrifice and loss.*

Lovely thoughts of white and purple  
Mary wove one winter day ;  
Where they fell, sprang up in April  
Violets, violets all the way.

### The Dream Child

**L**ITTLE one, to-day I heard  
Someone say :  
“Thoughts are facts,” and something stirred,  
Like the wakening of a bird  
At the break of day,  
In a shrine within my heart,  
All apart.  
“Thoughts create” . . . The heart-thing grew,  
Woke, and whispered. Then I knew.

Out of my longing and tenderness,  
Born of my love and my loneliness,  
One with the roses and waves and dew,  
I had fashioned—You !

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Soft through the night I heard it—  
A prattling in the stars,  
For a baby was playing peep-bo  
Behind their golden bars.

Peep-bo with mists and moonbeams,  
And little lightnings, too, .  
With the youngest clouds and rainbows,  
And the baby, sweet, was you !

A south wind breathed on the orchard,  
And the blossoms fell like snow ;  
You sat on his shoulder, clapping  
To see the petals go.

The waves crept to me whispering,  
And laid upon the sand  
A spray of clinging seaweed,  
And a shell from fairyland.

But, ah ! there came the glimmer  
Of little white-soled feet,  
As the water ran back laughing,  
And I took your gifts, my sweet.

The trees went swinging, swaying,  
As a hurrying wind swept by—  
You and a bird at see-saw,  
In the branches near the sky.

## 28 Dawn : Upper Egypt

I found a rose in the garden,  
And laid it to my cheek ;  
It brought the touch of fingers,  
Helpless and soft and weak.

You are one with the stars and sunset,  
The flowers and fields and sea,  
Moorland and dawn and forest—  
One with the world and me.

Mine in the daylight golden,  
Mine in the dream-time best,  
Close in the arms of my spirit,  
Hushed on my heart to rest.

## Dawn : Upper Egypt

**G**LEAM on gleam in the veiled dawn  
The feet of the Gods are but half withdrawn ;  
The Colour fringes their garments' hem,  
And the stones of the desert remember them.

Where the white mists enfold each hill  
Lingers their brooding presence still ;  
Still, though the glory of Thebes be done,  
The twin Colossi salute the sun.



Lure on lure at the break of morn  
The earth lies fair as the earth was born,  
And the old Gods walk in the mist and the dew  
Of an ancient splendour for ever new.

## Rain in Egypt

**S**OFT as a shower that April brings  
The rain fell on the growing wheat,  
And joy was in the plover's wings  
And in the wagtail's busy feet.

Silver and cool, the quick drops splashed  
On dusty palms and dustier banks ;  
Across the Nile a rainbow flashed  
And all the heart of me gave thanks.

Thrilled with a sudden, glad surprise  
I raised my face, and (ah, how much !)  
I felt on thirsty cheeks and eyes  
The dear, familiar, English touch.

## Frost Flowers

THE chrysanthemums live in a house of glass,  
to keep them safe from the cold—  
All happy and sheltered and warm they are, like  
little lambs in a fold ;  
No blinds nor curtains have they at night, to shut  
out the dusk and the sky—  
They can watch the stars and the drifting clouds  
and the brown owl sweeping by.

On nights when the garden is hushed and chill, by  
sleeping border and bed  
Fly the glimmering ghosts of the lovely flowers that  
died when the Summer fled ;  
With silver petals and gossamer wings down the  
desolate ways they pass,  
Pause at the house of chrysanthemums, and hover  
about the glass.

They press sweet faces against the pane to watch  
their sisters' sleep,  
Breathe them a cold, cold kiss, and then, with the  
wintry dawn they creep  
Back to their haunts of rainbow and mist ; and, lo,  
in the morning light  
We find the trace of the fairy flowers that fly with  
the frost of night.

Dilettanti

THEY came with gushing platitudes  
To "study Nature" in my woods,  
That they might, to their greater glory,  
Mouth her in sonnet and in story.

So intellectual, so wise !  
She dropped a veil before her eyes,  
And made her face a painted wall  
So that they nothing found at all.

They did not know, they went away  
Content with "Such a charming day !"

Outcast

DOWN blossoming ways, upon the happy star  
Where all young things of all Creation are—  
Small winds and rainbows and the thoughts of  
flowers,  
The unborn children laughed away the hours.

And like an aureole about each head  
Hovered the shining prayers a mother said ;  
And like a radiant garment, pearl-enwrought,  
About each form was wrapt a mother's thought.

Lovely and loved, the unborn children played,  
With tenderness enfolded and arrayed—  
Sported with stars upon the flowery sod,  
And prattled, clinging round the knees of God.

But as they played one, listening, turned his face  
Earthward, and saddened for a little space :  
“ Father, I hear their wistful voices cry ;  
Lonely and lost, I hear their feet go by—

“ Their little homeless feet that find no rest :  
For them no haven of a mother’s breast.  
Their sad eyes plead, their fluttering hands implore  
In vain, for ever and for evermore.

“ Somewhere for us a mother dreams and waits,  
But they are shut for aye outside the gates—  
The gates of Birth ; for us a mother prays,  
But they go desolate through all the days.

“ Father, look down ! Upon a suffering star  
Their fathers have been slain, been slain in  
War. . . .  
I hear them wail, bereaved and forlorn—  
The little children who can ne’er be born.”

## The Pipes of Pan

To the Author of "The Centaur."

**I**N that fair land where dead and unborn meet,  
Beyond the shadowy bars of time and space,  
With asphodel and poppies at his feet  
Pan lay asleep in a forgotten place.

The great god Pan lay sleeping with the dead,  
His pipes, their music muted, by his side,  
Dreaming long dreams of old-time Beauty fled—  
Glad dreams of wind and sunlight, earth and tide ;

Of Oreads wild in mountain solitudes,  
And Naiads laughing 'neath the river's flow,  
And little fauns at play in sun-flecked woods  
Where shimmering shapes of Dryads gleam and go.

And as he dreamed an unborn spirit crept  
On glimmering feet and, stooping o'er him, gazed  
All wonder and all worship. Still he slept,  
But sleeping stirred, and sighed and softly raised

His silent pipes, as if to play in dream  
Those rushing melodies a young world knew—  
Voices of tree and mountain, valley and stream,  
Compact of earth and breeze, of fire and dew.

## 34

Pan raised his pipes. Through age-long slumbers  
deep

The touch of worship pierced him like a thrill.

Yet ere the music to his lips could leap

The reeds slipped from his sleep-bound fingers, still.

Almost they sank once more amid the great

Dark-hearted poppies and the asphodel,

But, foreordained by some mysterious fate,

The unborn watcher caught them ere they fell.

\* \* \* \* \*

From that far land where dead and unborn meet

And face to face talk of Eternity,

A pristine soul on eager wings and fleet

Flew to the star that held his destiny.

And deep within him, like a singing fire

Strong to renew the weary life of man,

Sweet to allure and splendid to inspire,

Slept the forgotten, magic pipes of Pan.

Anon he touched them, waking music rare.

Once more upon the everlasting hills

The Oreads fled the winds with streaming hair,

The Naiads sported in the sparkling rills,

White-footed Dryads through the forests crept,

And little fauns hid lurking 'mid the flowers.

Wonder and Beauty to the measure leapt,

Joy flashed along the re-created hours,

And Youth eternal all the world possessed.  
Swift through the universe the message ran,  
Stirring sweet echoes in each listening breast :  
"The old gods live ! Hark, hark ! the pipes of  
Pan !"

## Stars

**O**RION is setting, setting into the west,  
Luminous, low ;  
His tilted torches sink to their golden rest,  
Splendid and slow,  
Till they seem, like blossoms with Paradise beauty  
fraught  
In the boughs of my budding chestnut tangled and  
caught.

Wind-flowers are rising, rising out of the earth,  
Mystical, pale,  
Filling dark woods with the light of their fragrant  
birth,  
Beautiful, frail.  
For never a star goes down into infinite space  
But another is born with the wonder of God on its  
face.

## 36 Love and the Gipsy

### Love and the Gipsy

ASK not, my friend, this thing of me—  
To hold me fettered who would be free :  
Drowsed by caresses, dulled by praise,  
Choked by possessions, cramped by walls,  
Plodding a placid round of days  
Year by year in my youth and strength,  
While the Open beckons and lures and calls !

I should hear, I should rise and flee at length  
Back to the lovely and lonely places,  
The sun and the wind and the great sky-spaces ;  
Back to the haunts of the shy wild things  
Where the rabbit plays and the blackbird sings  
And the white, white butterflies come in Spring ;  
Back to the stars and the mist and the dew,  
The grass of the downs and the purple ling,  
The winding road and the wash of the sea,  
To follow these only all life through . . .  
My friend, ask not this thing of me.



In August

**T**HE heather's out on the Yorkshire moors, in  
sight of the shimmering sea—  
Miles on billowing miles of purple, free as the skies  
are free,  
Where startled grouse rise out of their haunt, with  
a whirr and a warning cry,  
And black-faced sheep on little strong feet, on little  
sure feet go by.

The bracken's out on the Yorkshire moors, away to  
the edge of the world,  
With a wistful hint of Autumn gold where the  
withering fronds are curled,  
And down the slopes of the wide wild hills the  
swift cloud-shadows race—  
My spirit is there on a lonely height, with the sea-  
wind in her face !

Night Wind : Egypt

**W**E woke and watched the stars all jewel-bright.  
Sudden I heard, as I lay lover-warm  
In the encircling hollow of your arm,  
The old sad wind of Egypt in the night—

The desert wind that sifts the shifting sand  
O'er buried cities and tombs of vanished kings,  
Sad with the knowledge of forgotten things  
And old with memories none may understand.

Dead kings knew love and passion ere they slept,  
Dead cities once were glad with colour and light.  
Dust now, and sand. . . . The wind passed  
    through the night.  
I turned to you and hid my face and wept.

## Pastoral

WHAT flocks have I guarded,  
On what dewy steep,  
That here on the hillside  
Alone with the sheep,  
A memory shakes me  
Out of the deep?

In the skins of a shepherd  
I sit once again  
On a green hillside, playing  
An ancient refrain,  
With my ewes round me, piping  
My love and my pain.

## At Nazareth

“Hadst Thou ever any toys  
Like us little girls and boys ?”

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

O’ER his task, intent,  
The carpenter Joseph stooped.  
The shavings fell,  
Curled and white,  
Soft as the fall of leaves, to the sanded floor ;  
And a Child stood watching with wide-eyed serious  
gaze.

A smile,  
Little and tender,  
Softened the rugged face as the craftsman worked,  
And ever and anon  
He bent his regard on the Child—  
The Christ-child with the eyes sea-deep, miraculous.

His labour done  
He turned, and laid in the small, expectant hand  
A plaything,  
Fashioned with cunning art by the fingers of love—  
A little wooden lamb.

## 40      The Plea of Syrinx

### Gipsy Song

**T**HE kingdoms of the earth,  
And their wealth, what are they worth—  
Shadows that melt and pass,  
Phantoms that fade and die?  
The whole wide world is mine,  
And this I have for a sign—  
Over my head the sky,  
Under my feet the grass.

The kingdoms and their strength,  
What shall they yield at length—  
Pageants and pomps and powers,  
Wars and the rumour of wars?  
Mine is the rolling sphere,  
And the changes of the year—  
Over my head the stars,  
Under my feet the flowers.

### The Plea of Syrinx

**T**HE mist lay on the river as I roamed the  
water's edge,  
And a little wind of twilight murmured ghostly in  
the sedge—  
A wayward wind of evening shook the reeds to  
melody,  
And a voice came echoing softly down the long  
dead years to me.

## The Plea of Syrinx 41

“Not for fear of thee I fled thee, not for fear my  
winged feet ran

Down the dewy slopes of Arcadie, from thy desire,  
O Pan :

For love of thee it was—I knew, fulfilled, thy love  
must die—

Thou wast a god, and naught but one of a myriad  
nymphs was I.

“The love of gods is golden, great and golden—for  
a day,

But my heart recked of the ruin with the rapture  
passed away ;

The love of gods is fickle—fair and fugitive as  
Spring,

And my heart divined the aftermath, the sad  
remembering.

“So to keep thy love I fled it (hear me whisper,  
hear me sigh—

’Tis the lonely wind of twilight wakes regret and  
memory)—

Fled the wonder of thy passion and the bliss of  
thine embrace

For the likeness of a trembling reed beside the  
water’s face.

“I loved thee ; I denied thee. To the river thou  
didst steal,

Haply to find a balm to ease the longing thou didst  
feel ;

Didst take me, and didst fashion, and thy lips on  
me didst lay

Till the reed sobbed forth in music all the maid had  
feared to say.

## In July

“The flame of thy desire and my love all unpossessed  
 Met in melody and mingled. O’er the river’s rip-  
 pling breast  
 Passing sweet the echoes floated, and the green earth  
 leapt to hear  
 The piping of the great god Pan in the spring-time  
 of the year.”

\* \* \* \* \*

*The mist lay on the river as I roamed the water’s edge,  
 And a little wind of twilight murmured ghostly in the  
 sedge—  
 A wayward wind of evening shook the reeds to melody,  
 And a voice came echoing softly down the long dead years  
 to me.*

## In July

THE rose bay willow herb is out,  
 And yet you are not here to see ;  
 Between the pine-trees all about  
 The rose bay willow herb is out ;  
 Where the tall fronds of bracken sprout,  
 And wild things wander glad and free,  
 The rose bay willow herb is out,  
 And yet you are not here to see.

# Our Lady of Compassion 43

## Our Lady of Compassion

MARY, O Mary Mother, ere He was born  
Didst thou not yearn to gather to thy breast  
All things unhappy, helpless, hurt, forlorn,  
And fold them close for comfort and for rest?  
Didst thou not yearn with tears,  
In secret shed, through unfulfill'd years?

Mary, O Mary Mother, didst thou not long  
To take each soul's hid grief and make thine own,  
To share all loss and loneliness and wrong,  
Terror and anguish—thou, a woman, alone?  
Oft-times, before He came,  
Wast thou not heavy with those others' shame?

Mary, O Mary Mother, didst thou not feel  
The weight of burdens thou couldst never bear,  
The sting of wounds thou mightst not stanch nor  
    heal,  
The lash of punishments thou couldst not share?

\* \* \* \* \*

Nor love nor ruth sufficed  
Till thou didst give them to the world in Christ.

## Rain

**T**HROUGH the night I hear the rain  
Splashing on the ivy-leaves,  
Whispering all about the pane,  
Dripping from the darkened eaves ;  
And I cannot sleep at all,  
Here immured, nor quiet rest,  
For the low and singing call  
Finds an echo in my breast.

Pan ! to be outdoors, and stand  
All alone and all unclad,  
On a strip of forest land,  
Feeling, like the birches, glad,  
Glad and glistening 'neath the thrill  
Of the soft, delicious touch,  
Dreaming, like the beeches, still . . .  
Ah, how little—and how much !

## Primeval

“ **F**IERCE fighting in a wood ”—so read  
The city placards. Suddenly,  
From out dim æons of the dead  
There flashed a memory.

Once more a tree with trees, I stood  
Where men fought howling in the dark,  
And felt the touch of human blood  
Hot-spattered on my bark.



Once more I watched the red dawn rise  
Upon a redder solitude,  
And dropped dead leaves on sightless eyes. . . .  
"Fierce fighting in a wood."

## Unforgotten

A LAWLESS night of wind and rain,  
An open moor, a starlit sky,  
A sense half ecstasy, half pain,  
As we went galloping, you and I,  
On one horse galloping, galloping by.

So many lives, so long ago,  
Have you remembered through the years?  
Where are you now? I cannot know,  
So much between of doubts and fears,  
So many loves, so many tears.

If Fate decrees we meet again  
Shall we not gallop as of yore,  
Through howling wind and driving rain  
In darkness, on a northern moor,  
And love, as we have loved before?

## Moonstruck

**H**USH ! did you ever see the moon come down  
to love a tree ?—

Upon a night in early Spring (the world a magic  
realm

Of silver light and shadows long) she blessed the  
eyes of me,

Held in the lacy branches of a little flowering elm.

She leaned against the glimmering boughs ; so close,  
so low she hung,

The tiny twigs and feathery flowers caressed her  
quiet face—

They gave her dreams of many a bloom she knew  
when she was young,

And all her coloured gardens flung their scent out  
into space.

The moon's so old, it breaks the heart. When  
Spring comes to this star

She sees and she remembers. . . . Very softly I  
crept by,

But when I turned and looked again, alone, aloof,  
afar,

She kept amid her frozen towers her old place in  
the sky..

## June Dusk

THEY'RE dancing now in London  
(The summer's sweet and new).  
I'd rather walk at twilight,  
Here in the fields at twilight,  
Through buttercups and clover,  
Barefooted in the dew.

They're dancing now in London  
(The summer's new and sweet).  
I'd rather feel the clover,  
The meadow vetch and clover,  
And the dear cool grass of twilight  
Beneath my naked feet.

## Night Rain

ALL night the rain fell murmurous and low ;  
Mysterious silence held the dripping wood,  
Where drenched in dream the trees stood motion-  
less :  
All night the rain beat rhythmical and slow.

From stream and garden, coppice, lane, and park,  
The spirit of the earth, benign and good,  
Rose in a myriad wild wet scents to bless  
The silver angel singing in the dark.

## 48 Christ of the Night

### Wet Beeches

**T**O-DAY in the wood, by the leaf-strewn track,  
The rain-drenched beeches are copper and  
black:

Glimmers the trunk of each dripping tree—

A pillar of polished ebony ;

Like burnished metal the wet leaves glow

And fall in the solitude shivering-slow.

To-day in the wood, by the leaf-strewn track,  
The rain-drenched beeches are copper and black.

### Christ of the Night

**T**HE great trees shout hosannas in the dark,  
Tremble, and bend in adoration—hark !

Along the sky

(Swift, swift His feet to follow and to find !)

The Master passes by,

Walking the waves, the restless waves of wind,

As once on Galilee

He walked the sea.

Above a world of weariness and sleep

He with the stars His ancient watch doth keep,

And near as air

(Swift, swift His hands to pardon and to bless !)

His voice comes everywhere,

One with the night's eternal loveliness,

O'er forest, vale, and hill :

*Peace, peace, be still !*

A Spring Magnificat

FOR wild anemones star-shining in the little  
wood ;  
For the scent of wet earth and of growing things  
after rain ;  
For the song of the thrush ;  
For the mounting sap ;  
For the unfolding of the little curled ferns and the  
daisies' awakening—  
Praise ineffable !

For the dance of the white narcissi in the south  
wind ;  
For the feathery emerald fronds of the tossing  
larch ;  
For the sulphur butterflies ;  
For purple shadows on a blossoming mist of blue-  
bells ;  
For young lambs and little rabbits and all happy  
new-born things at play in the fields—  
Praise unutterable !

For the fragrant foam of the wild parsley ;  
For bees in the clover ;  
For rainbows and stars and the rosy blossom of the  
wild apple ;  
For the sense of birth ;  
For the voice of resurrection ;  
For all sounds and sights and scents of the eternal  
miracle, Spring—  
Praise, praise, and thanks for ever !

## In Autumn

**T**HE dead leaves fall, their little hour is past ;  
The dahlias droop ; the roses fail at last :  
Summer has come and gone with all her train,  
And this year's flowers will never bloom again ;  
Summer has passed in pomp and pageantry,  
And we were not together, you and I.

What though fresh flowers will blow another year,  
Birds sing as sweetly, skies be just as clear,  
And leaves as green bedeck the trees anew ?  
I have spent all this summer without you.  
So grey the earth, so cold, and through the rain  
The swallows fly. . . . It will not come again.

## Sea Fret

**T**HE sea has haunted me all day—  
I heard it in the scented wood,  
Where drowsily the pine-trees sway,  
And russet shadows gather and brood :  
Grey as the fringes of a dream  
Between dim trunks I saw it gleam.

Over the golden harvest grass  
There swept a sudden wind and free—  
A rhythmical and rippling mass  
Of waters blessed the eyes of me.  
Sunlight and breeze o'er uncut hay—  
The sea has haunted me all day.

## Early Winter

**B**<sup>ROWN</sup>, crimson, orange, and purple in the  
wood,  
'Mid rotting fern and leaves that are sodden and  
dead,  
The fungi grow where in spring the bluebells stood,  
And the sighing trees wave wind-stripped arms  
o'erhead.

Chrysanthemums droop in the garden beds, frost-  
slain ;  
The days wax short as the heart of the year grows  
old,  
But the robin sings like an angel in the rain,  
And the gorse on the hill bears new-found flowers  
of gold.

Quiet and clean comes the scent of the fresh-turned  
sod,  
As the patient horses go plodding before the plough,  
And the setting sun, like a great sky-apple of God,  
Glows red through the mists, low-hung on an un-  
seen bough.

## The Star Child

**I**N His storehouse vast of a million stars  
God set the souls of the babes unborn,  
And their radiance fell through the golden bars  
On a far-off world and a race forlorn.

But He took in His hands a soul apart,  
More white and wise than the rest might be,  
And laid it close to His lonely heart  
Till it heard the beat of Eternity,

The rhythm of wave and wind and earth,  
The secret breathing of sap and sod,  
The throb of Creation and Death and Birth—  
There on the heart of Almighty God.

And the soul of the child waxed great and grand  
And simple as His high mysteries are,  
All-tender to pity and understand.  
God saw, and created another star.

A myriad rays to a single star  
The souls of the unborn children shone,  
But God created in love, afar,  
A shrine apart for His perfect One.

\* \* \* \* \*

From a world in darkness far beneath  
A wail uprose to the patient Ears—  
A shuddering cry of woe and death,  
Despair and anguish—a voice of tears.

God out of His heaven beheld a Maid  
So pure as the star that held the soul  
Of His perfect unborn Child. God said,  
*A Mother and Babe shall save the Whole.*

At His word the soul flew down to earth,  
To a body tender and soft and small  
That lay in a manger—for His birth  
No room there was in the inn at all.



And the star shone bright in the eastern sky,  
O'er the stable rude where the young child slept  
To the music of Mary's lullaby,  
While the hovering angels vigil kept.

With gifts of frankincense, gold, and myrrh  
The Wise Men came, by the radiance led,  
To where, in the stainless arms of her  
Their Monarch cradled His helpless head.

O'er the wondrous portals, out of sight,  
Of the rainbow nursery where child-saints play  
There blazes a great and deathless light—  
"The Star of the Saviour's Soul," they say.

## At Christmas

PATIENT at the pasture gate  
The calm-eyed cattle stand and wait  
Till the herdsman come to lead them  
Shedward, so to tend and feed them,  
House them safe till morning light  
From the bitter winter night.

In the frosty sunset glow  
Their coats a ruddier russet show,  
And their breath like incense rises,  
Sweet as mists the dawn surprises.  
See, a little early star  
Points their mangers, where they are !

## 54 "No Night There"

Baby Christ was born to-day. . . .  
Did they wait, this very way,  
Till the herdsman led them slowly  
To the shed where, dear and lowly,  
He laying sleeping in a stall ?  
Did they understand at all ?

## "There shall be no Night There"

(Rev. xxi. 25.)

**N**O night in Heaven ? No dusk nor dawn,  
Nor sunset flaming in the west ?  
No great moon-shadows on a lawn—  
A dreaming lawn all dew-possessed ?  
From earth and flowers no wild sweet scent  
Through darkness, like a sacrament ?

No lure of dark-enchanted trees ?  
No song of nightingale, nor call  
Of owl ? No phosphorescent seas,  
Nor any little stars at all ?  
No stealthy stir of shy earth things,  
Nor glow-worm's light, nor moth's dim wings ?

At eve no creeping mists to lie  
In furrowed fields ? No bats that wheel  
Their rhythmic ways against the sky ?  
No hands of sleep to hush and heal ?  
No night in Heaven ? Dear God, what bliss  
Thy light-enveloped angels miss !

## A Silver Birch

(To the Author of "Pan's Garden.")

SHE listens and droops and murmurs,  
And the fancy comes to me :  
Could the wistful soul of a woman  
Be hid in a white, white tree ?

A woman of waving tresses  
And supple and sun-kissed limbs,  
Of smilings and dewy dreamings,  
Of sorrows and wind-stirred whims ?

\* \* \* \*

To the holy heart of the forest  
I fled on a prayerless night :  
God in the heights had forgotten,  
And the stars were out of sight.

I wept in the lonely forest ;  
Through a dream I heard her sigh,  
Shiver and sigh in the darkness,  
As time and my life went by.

The veil of her leaves drooped o'er me  
As loosened hair from its bands  
And her branches swayed and shuddered  
Like the wringing of woman's hands.

## The Return

Her arms were as curves of pity,  
 Held out—as a woman would ;  
 The dew shone like tears upon her. . . .  
 I know that she understood.

\* \* \* \* \*

She wonders and dreams and whispers,  
 And the fancy clings to me  
 That the soul of a tender woman  
 Possesses my white, white tree.

## The Return

**T**HE trees sigh in the dark ;  
 Fast falls the rain ;  
 A west wind sobs, and—hark !  
 How the ivy beats  
 Wild hands at the shuttered pane !  
 Do you hear me cry,  
 Wistful, beseeching, lone,  
 From earth and sky ?

The tears of rain implore ;  
 The tall trees sway  
 In yearning round your door ;  
 With a voice of wings  
 The wind entreats alway.  
 Do you hear me call,  
 Fain for your following feet,  
 And heed at all ?

One with the stir of leaves,  
The soft sad rain,  
The ivy 'neath the eaves  
And the wandering wind,  
I have come to you again,  
Though they call me dead—  
Here, in the night we loved,  
With the storm o'erhead.

## A Surrey Wood

THE pine-trees sway  
In a mood of sleep,  
And squirrels leap  
In the boughs at play ;  
Caught by the sun the bracken dead  
Glints red as the squirrel's coat is red.

The wood-doves' coo  
And the cones unfold ;  
Dim brown and gold  
Are the aisles all through :  
Shadow and scent and silence deep  
In the heart of a pine wood fast asleep.

## The Wagtail

DAPPER in suit of black and white,  
Upon the lawn with dips and runs  
He searches food from morn till night  
To carry to his little ones.

So quick his tail, so bright his eye,  
His ways so gay and debonair,  
The swallows greet him, sailing by,  
The vulgar sparrows only stare.

When he was made with heavenly wile  
And set on Eden lawns untrod,  
For sure there dwelt a little smile  
Upon the tender face of God.

## The Night Nursery

WHIST ! when the moon goes  
On silver tip-toes  
By where the stars peep—  
Gold eyes that won't sleep,  
What's she come out for,  
Out of her cloud-door ?

Whist ! She's a mother,  
Sure, for no other  
Would lose her own rest,  
Loving the stars best—  
Children that *won't* sleep,  
Bright eyes that *will* peep !

## Angelus

*WAVE upon wave and wing on wing,  
The sunset, like a flood,  
Broke golden on the listening wood,  
And in the flame-filled solitude  
I heard a fir-tree sing.*

“O Miracle of light and breeze !

O Mystery, O Wonder, O Majesty beyond all  
telling !

With my eyes set to the east I feel the dawn, with  
my brow open to the west I know the dusk ;

The fingers of rain touch me and thrill, the little  
wings of wind pass through my hair ;

At eve I watch the mists gather in the furrowed  
fields, I hear the cattle cropping the dew-  
drenched grass ;

The shy wild things go rustling around my feet, all  
day I hear the talking of the birds ;

The squirrel comes to me unafraid, swift are his  
little feet along my branches,

Russet-red his coat gleams amid my dark-plumed  
sprays—as the colour of withered bracken  
caught by the sun, so is his coat ;

Hid in my boughs the grey wood-dove croons and  
the long-tailed magpie chatters ;

The rabbit crouches in my shade, the brown wood-  
vole burrows at my roots ;

The tiger moth climbs up my bark on delicate feet,  
the white ghost-moth flits by me at night ;

About my head circles the velvet bat ;  
All the timid earth-things bear me love.  
Spring and summer, autumn and winter, Joy fails  
not at any time.

“I see the birth of the first wood-hyacinth, and the  
star-shining of the earliest white wind-flower ;  
The little curled ferns unfold beneath my gaze ;  
With a shout I raise my voice in the hour of storm,  
and I toss wild arms ;  
Softly I brood in the hot and windless days, steeped  
in sun I dream ;  
I stand motionless 'neath the thrill of the summer  
rain, tranced under the spell of the snow I  
sleep ;  
I weep with the mist, I glitter in the frost.  
Day and night, dawn and dusk, wind, sun, and rain,  
Beauty fails not for ever.  
O Prayer, O Praise, O Peace !”

*Wave upon wave and wing on wing  
The sunset like a flood,  
Broke golden on the listening wood,  
And in the flame-filled solitude  
I heard a fir-tree sing.*



## Holy Ground

**T**HE eyes of Moses once beheld God's glory  
in a burning bush ;  
His ears received the Voice divine ; his feet in  
hallowed precincts stood.

\* \* \* \* \*

The red December sunset flares behind the naked  
trees, and—hush !

A sound of wind and sweeping wings comes rushing  
through the little wood :

For sure God walks the earth to-day, a Presence  
felt in light and breeze—

A sunset wood His burning bush, His voice the  
voice of wind-swept trees.

## Worship

**I** CAME into the little wood  
For homage to the trees,  
And, lo, a starry multitude  
Already at their knees—  
White-vestured wood-anemones  
That trembled in the breeze.

We watched the shadows gloom and go,  
The sunbeams gleam and pass ;  
For joy of God's green heaven below  
We breathed a spring-time mass—  
I and the wood-anemones  
Together in the grass.

## Our Lady's Bedstraw

**T**HROUGH the fields came Mary Mother,  
In the twilight dim and grey;  
All the dew-wet grasses quivered,  
All the wild flowers bent one way.

Buttercups and vetch and clover  
Laid their kisses on her feet;  
From the hedges swayed towards her  
Wild white roses, faintly sweet.

Night drew down, all cool and quiet.  
Mary Mother sought to rest,  
Slept upon a bank of blossoms—  
Yellow spires, fragrant, blest.

Lighting up the fields in summer,  
Fields akin to those she trod,  
Still it grows—Our Lady's Bedstraw,  
Common as the thought of God.

## A Look

**W**HAT cruelty have you wrought me in other  
times and lands—  
Rose-red gardens of Persia or gold Egyptian sands;  
What measure of pain and torment (though I loved  
you fiercely and well)  
That, meeting your eyes this moment, I know the  
terror of hell?

## Night Wind

63

Deep as the sea and as cruel, your eyes hold mine  
for a space.  
The lights and the people vanish . . . narrow to  
one dark face,  
And the old wild love and the anguish come surging  
back in a wave  
With the look in your eyes that draws me to the  
years behind the grave.

## Night Wind

THE wind is wild to-night.  
The little wood, exultant, shouts and sings ;  
Out in the dark the sky is full of wings  
In swift mysterious flight.

To-night the wind is high,  
Roaring o'er spaces, sobbing round dim eaves,  
Strewing the heavens with clouds and scattered  
leaves—  
But in four walls am I.

Some night the wind will call,  
And I shall leave the house that holds me fast,  
And follow, follow through the skies at last,  
Nor e'er come back at all.

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